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THE ANTI-SOVIET DYNAMIC: THE BASIS OF PRESENT CHINESE AFRICAN P--ETC(U)
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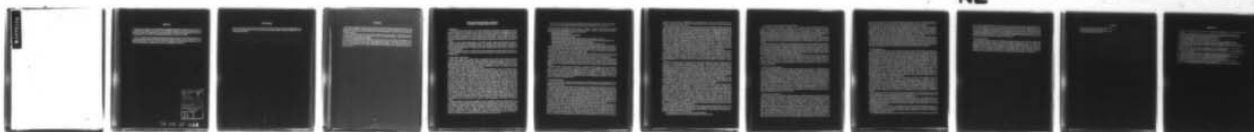


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PREFACE

This report was prepared by the 432d Military Intelligence Detachment (Strategic), an Army Reserve unit based at Fort Wadsworth, New York. The 432d MID is assigned the mission of supporting the US Army War College in the preparation of studies and analyses of strategic military significance. Operational training guidance is provided by the Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College.

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SUMMARY

The African continent has within recent years become an area of extreme interest and concern to US foreign policy formulators. Among the many reasons for this new interest has been the recent and rapid emergence of new nations and the realization that the African continent is a treasure chest of strategically important resources.

A factor which has been present on the African continent since the early 1950's is the bitter and constant rivalry between the two giants of the Communist world, the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).

This paper briefly discusses the involvement of these nations in African affairs with emphasis on the PRC presence, and the dynamics of their relationship on the continent. It also examines the nature and extent of this Sino-Soviet rivalry from a historical/political perspective. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of the Sino-Soviet dispute for US foreign policy formulation and national security concerns.

THE ANTI-SOVIET DYNAMIC: THE BASIS OF PRESENT CHINESE AFRICAN POLICY

I. Introduction.

The present African foreign policy of the People's Republic of China (PRC) is evolutionary in nature having been altered at several stages in order to best serve the PRC's interests. In formulating this foreign policy it is apparent that external and internal factors influenced policy makers. The external factors were the actions and pronouncements of African leaders, wary of the PRC's "wars of liberation" and the constant presence of the Sino-Soviet rivalry. Although the internal factors were less evident, not displayed before any foreign spectators, the Cultural Revolution had a noted impact on foreign policy decisions and activity.

Perhaps the most obvious characteristic of the PRC's African foreign policy has been its apparent flexibility. Foreign policy decisions always seemed to be focused on maximizing the PRC's objectives or primary concerns, all apparently long range in nature. Among these basic concerns seem to have been the security and territorial integrity of China and the PRC's standing among world nations, especially the Third World countries.

From a long range viewpoint it is expected that these primary and long-range concerns will continue to dominate the PRC's interaction with other nations and that flexibility of foreign policy will continue to be a characteristic.

II. Present PRC Foreign Policy.

Present PRC foreign policy toward Africa in particular and the Third World countries in general evolved over a number of decades and is based in antecedent foreign policy decisions. The PRC did not emerge in 1949 with its present African foreign policy but rather modified and shaped it through a series of successes and more importantly failures. It is, therefore, necessary to consider the many phases through which PRC African foreign policy evolved in order to comprehend the nature and content of the present PRC approach to relations with the countries of Africa.

The first stage of PRC African involvement covered approximately six years, from 1949 until 1955. During this period of time Chinese foreign policy interests were very similar to those of the Soviet Union and neither country had as yet evidenced any interest in the African continent. The second stage of PRC foreign involvement spanned roughly four years, from 1955 to 1959. During March 1955, the Bandung Conference was convened in Jakarta, Indonesia, by 24 Asian and African leaders. This was to be China's first exposure in a long series of contacts with African nations. The Soviet Union, as an Asian nation and for other reasons, sought to attend this meeting. The Chinese, however, were successful in having the Soviet Union excluded. This occurrence was to mark the theme of opposition to and independence from the Soviet sphere of influence, which was to shape the course of African politics for decades and perhaps generations. During this phase of PRC foreign relations it was the PRC's aim to undertake a socially and economically independent road from that of the Soviet Union. Additionally, the PRC adopted and followed seven principles developed at the Bandung Conference which were intended to guide the attending nations. The PRC, during this period of time, even embarked on a road of peaceful coexistence with Communist and non-Communist nations. The PRC's apparent underlying motivation was to attempt to gain friends and influence, in Asia, at the expense of the Western nations. Therefore, instead of the use of force in attempting to eliminate Western influence in Asia, as in the Korean War, a subtle approach was to be employed. This new approach, however, was short lived since, by 1957, the PRC had embarked on a road characterized by pronouncements of revolution "and the advantages of the Maoist revolutionary model."

Alliances founded on militant anti-imperialism were now undertaken. This then was the theme of the third period of Chinese foreign relations which was to last from approximately 1957 until 1965. This period was marked by an aggressive PRC stance in pursuing its foreign policy dictates and by open opposition to Soviet influence on the continent of Africa. In attempting to develop closer relations with Asian and Third World non-Communist countries, technical assistance, economic assistance, and trade relations were established. Additionally and most significantly, "wars of national liberation" were wholeheartedly supported. During his visit to Africa beginning on December 11, 1963, China's interest in the nations of Africa were explicitly expounded upon by Chou-En-lai. Chou let it be known that:

One of the main contents of the foreign policy of the Chinese government is active support for the national democratic movements in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Naturally, we sympathize with and support each other. Moreover, since China won its own victory, it has the obligation to support countries which have not yet won victory or are about to win it.²

It was Chou-En-lai's feeling that Africa was "ripe for revolution." In order to gain favor and to influence the emergent and newly-emerging African nations he publicly revealed his "eight idealistic principles." The eight principles made public on January 15, 1964 were:

- . Equality and national support;
- . Respect for the sovereignty of the recipients;
- . A low interest rate, if any, for loans;
- . Aid aimed at creating an independent economy based on the recipient's resources;
- . Priority for projects requiring small investments and with a potential for producing rapid results;
- . Supplying high quality, Chinese-made equipment and machinery;
- . Training Africans to maintain the technical installations built by the Chinese; and,
- . That the living conditions of Chinese advisors and technicians should not differ from those of equivalent African workers in the host countries and that no special facilities be requested for the Chinese.³

The PRC additionally sought to gain inroads by opportunism where it could in Africa. Chinese interest in Africa, therefore, was to shift from North Africa in 1957, to West and Central Africa from 1959 to 1962, and then to East and Central Africa from 1962 to 1965.

From 1967 to 1969 the PRC was primarily concerned with her problems at home in the form of the Cultural Revolution. During this interval the PRC's relations with many African nations deteriorated and many African leaders became suspicious of and rejected the PRC's theme of "wars of liberation."

By 1968, China had begun to reexamine its African foreign policy in the face of continuing setbacks and subsequently toned down its revolutionary fervor. China's new basis for relations with its Third World neighbors was now to be founded in generous economic aid. Therefore, by 1970, China was providing the largest amount of Communist foreign aid to Africa, which was to surpass Soviet aid by more than \$400 million.

The PRC's present African policy is focused on cooperation with Communist and non-Communist nations on a basis of mutual benefit. China has given aid to an increasingly wider range of African countries and has shifted from small "progressive nations" to the larger more important ones. China still identifies with the nations of the Third World and continues to appeal to the "colored" peoples of the world to fight in order to maintain their independent status. Although the tone of the PRC's relationship with the developing world has been modified, the focus of her determination continues to be the active opposition to Soviet and Western powers.

III. PRC-USSR Relations.

Among the many factors which have influenced the course of PRC foreign policy in general and African foreign policy in particular, perhaps the most crucial and decisive has been the ongoing feud between the PRC and the Soviet Union.

Subsequent to the successful struggle of the Communists over the Nationalists in 1949, the Soviet Union and China emerged as close allies. The newly created Communist China was to emulate the Soviet Union in the model it would employ in establishing its own Communist state. This close relationship, however, did not last very long since, subsequent to the Korean War, the PRC was to emerge a militarily stronger and more influential country in the eyes of other Asian nations. The split which was to develop between the two states was gradual and widened as a result of events covering a period of approximately 10 years. Among the events which were to lead to open and bitter hostilities between the two countries were the following: 1) the death of Stalin in 1953; 2) the doctrine of peaceful coexistence with the West, as promulgated by Nikita S. Krushchev; 3) the Soviet Union's withdrawal of assistance in China's quest for nuclear technology; and, finally, 4) the Soviet Union's 1958 refusal to back the PRC in the Quemoy and Matsu dispute.

The apparent starting point of the rivalry between the two nations can be traced to the convening of the Bandung Conference. As previously stated, the Soviet Union had been desirous of gaining admittance to the Conference, but, as a consequence of the PRC's initiatives, was instead excluded from among the conferees. After 1957 the PRC was to embark on a road to economic and social independence from the Soviet Union. China was also to take on a much more aggressive stance in world politics, particularly as related to emerging Third World nations. Consequently, the PRC pursued and cultivated closer economic ties with Asian and non-Communist countries of the Third World, which took the form of technical

assistance and trade relations. Additionally, an important element in these new relationships was the support for "wars of liberation." These new Chinese initiatives were to exacerbate the tense relationship between the PRC and the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union had been slow in recognizing the significance of the emerging nationalist mood on the African continent and had, therefore, not evidenced too great a degree of interest until approximately 1958. However, by 1960, the Soviet Union had established relationships with Ghana, Egypt, Guinea and Mali. The PRC's contact with African leaders, however, can be traced to the Bandung Conference. By May of 1956, the PRC had established diplomatic relations with Egypt and subsequently the PRC's first African embassy was established in Cairo. Therefore, although with a few years difference, both the PRC and the Soviet Union were to grasp the significance of the African independence movements and each was to pursue closer relations with and greater influence upon the emergent and emerging African leaders. These events—the PRC's independent course of action and its competition in Africa with the Soviet Union—were to lead to hostilities and moves and countermoves by each country to outdo the other. The primary area of disagreement and confrontation was centered around whether the PRC or the Soviet Union was to orchestrate the Communist movement on the African continent, and, secondarily, the nature of Communist activities in Africa. The PRC was interested in presenting "its own revolutionary experience as a model for the colonial people," and subsequently gave precedence to "wars of liberation."

The Moscow Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties, convened in November 1969, served as yet another wedge which was to drive the two giants further apart. During this conference, which was to discuss the most expedient course in exploiting the forces of nationalism, both the PRC and the Soviet Union sought to attain dominance over the other. The Soviet Union was convinced that economic development and not open struggles of liberation was the most expedient approach to relations with the newly emerging nations. One of the Soviet Union's concerns was the eventuality or potential for nuclear wars.

The PRC, on the other hand, felt that the Soviet Union was no longer interested in revolution and had given up the real fight against imperialism and colonialism substituting economic development for revolution "as the principal task of the liberation movement." The PRC did not consider economic competition as the answer nor did they feel that nuclear war was a real eventuality. In any event, the Soviet Union was able to convince the 81 Communist party attendees that the Soviet approach was the more viable and advantageous to the Communist movement in Africa. The Soviet Union's proposed approach "irked China because she was convinced that any temporary gains in such areas as trade and/or political accommodation with nationalists would be extremely risky. Peking feared the leaders would backslide and even if they did not, the national democratic states would slow rather than hasten global revolution."

The result was open conflict between the Soviet Union and the PRC. As a consequence, the PRC initiated public attacks which openly contested Soviet political theory and policy. Chinese delegates, when given the opportunity to address public forums, expressed the PRC's strong disapproval and the PRC took every opportunity to discredit the Soviet Union with the nations of the Third World.

The PRC, in its campaign to undermine Soviet influence in Africa, repeatedly warned African nations against the emergent Soviet expansionism. The PRC maintained that, "In the current struggle against colonialism, imperialism and hegemonism we developing countries must especially guard against the danger of letting the tiger (the Soviet Union) in through the back door while repulsing the wolf (the United States) through the front gate." In addition, the PRC took every opportunity to discredit and denounce Soviet initiatives in Africa. To this end the PRC utilized world forums as a platform. From the Bandung Conference to the second Afro-Asian Summit Conference convened in Algeria to the 1963 Moshi Conference of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization, the PRC took every opportunity to gain the upper hand over the Soviets. In this continuing campaign a Radio Peking broadcast stated that, "following the example of U.S. imperialism, Soviet revisionist social imperialism has in recent years made heavy inroads upon Asia, Africa and Latin America in the name of providing economic and military aid...." In their public denouncements of each other the PRC and the Soviet Union continue to accuse each other of imperialist or colonialist exploitation.

The continuing feud between the PRC and the Soviet Union has gone beyond words in that the two nations have found each other on opposing sides of the Angolan Civil War. Since the beginning of the Angolan struggle for independence from Portugal in 1961, the PRC has provided aid to the nationalists. By 1971, three dominant factions had evolved:

- . The Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA)
- . The National Movement for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA)

The National Front of Angolan Liberation (FNLA)

There seemed to be little difference among the three regarding social and political objectives and, therefore, the PRC supported all three. However, when it became apparent that Portugal was to make a final exit from Angola, the Soviet Union entered the scenario in support of the MPLA. The PRC subsequently shifted its aid to the UNITA and FNLA forces. In 1975 when civil war finally erupted, the PRC found itself backing the same factions which were also receiving support from the United States and South Africa, and for the same reason—opposition to Soviet influence on the African continent.

By 1963 it became apparent that the Soviet Union had begun to question her approach to the developing African countries and the Soviets commenced to shift their views regarding the extent to which African nationalism would best serve as a vehicle for Soviet expansion. A revision of Soviet foreign policy in Africa ensued.

Consequently, during the mid-1960's to early 1970's Soviet interest in African problems decreased. The new areas of Soviet policy concern shifted to the Middle East and to southeast Asia. The Soviet Union's new African approach sought to decrease the economic drain which the continent represented. Today, their ideology is more flexible and attuned to local political realities. They present themselves to Africa as an anticolonial, antiracist power which supports African national unity, without political strings. Today, as before, the Soviets seek to maintain permanent vigilance to formally exploit any situation which opposes Western influence in general and Chinese influence in particular.

It is, therefore, obvious that the seeds of rivalry and antagonism between the PRC and the Soviet Union have been sown deeply. A recent manifestation of this deep and continuing rivalry between the PRC and the Soviet Union appeared to have been the armed conflict between Vietnam and Cambodia. Since the Soviets are said to be aiding the Vietnamese and the Cambodians receive assistance from the PRC, this conflict has been characterized as another manifestation of the continual Sino-Soviet struggle for primacy on the Asian Continent.

IV. Nature of Sino-Soviet Dispute.

The previously described Sino-Soviet African confrontation merely reflects the antagonism which characterizes the worldwide relationship between these two giants. These differences have been placed in "geo-political" terms encompassing not only ideological differences, touched upon to a limited extent in the foregoing discussion, but also and perhaps more importantly vast areas of territorial dispute. The PRC claims sovereignty to over 1.5 million square miles of land in the Soviet's Eastern Siberian and Pacific coastal areas and 300,000 square miles of Central Asia. This has been roughly computed to be between 10-15 percent of the Soviet's land mass. Additionally, the PRC also desires the Mongolian Republic which represents an additional 600,000 square miles. It, therefore, becomes apparent that the border disputes and open conflict which have occurred between the two countries are not merely the result of ill defined borders amendable to negotiations, but rather involve vast land areas not as easily negotiated. Although it is conceivable that the two countries would be able to reconcile their ideological differences, the resolution of their territorial dispute could probably prove to be impossible. Most significant is the fact that the territorial dispute is historical in nature and can be traced back to the era of the Russian czars and Chinese dynasties, indicating the persistence of the problem.

V. Implications for US Security.

Perhaps as a result of the USSR-PRC ideological dispute, the PRC has proposed a three world concept which formally divides and separates the Communist world. The first world encompasses the United States and the Soviet Union, the superpowers said to compete with each other for world domination. The PRC regards the superpowers as the cause of the world's problems and sees as one of her main objectives the opposition to Soviet and US world influence. The Second World is said to be composed of the industrialized nations which are not superpowers. Finally, the Third World consists of the nonindustrialized nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America with which the PRC identifies. According to PRC theory the nations of the Third World have been the victims of the designs of the superpowers and the poverty and underdevelopment of the Third World countries are attributed to imperialist exploitation. Most importantly, Communist/non-Communist nations can be found in each of these three categories, illustrating the fallacy of a united Communist front. Therefore, the world is no longer perceived by the PRC in Communist versus non-Communist terms but perhaps is viewed more within economic terms. The PRC argues that "due to the emergence of revisionism and later social imperialism in the Soviet Union, the

socialist camp that existed for a time after World War II is no longer in existence." This state of affairs has led to open competition, armed confrontation, and continued hostility between the Soviets and the PRC. At the same time, their efforts to win over other Communist nations to their camp continues.

The significance for the United States of this ongoing dispute, based upon its longevity and gravity, centers upon the fact that the Sino-Soviet differences may be irreconcilable or at least not amenable to resolution in the near future. Furthermore, based upon the nature and extent of this "geo-political" dispute, the Soviet Union rather than the United States has come to be perceived by China as the PRC's primary adversary. Additionally, and of paramount importance, is the ideological wedge which has resulted not only between these two nations but within the Communist camp as a whole.

The security implications derived from this situation, therefore, appear to be very obvious. No longer is the United States and the Western world threatened by a Communist monolith united and dedicated to overpowering and eliminating the western forms of government. Rather the situation is more realistically one of the two primary Communist world leaders being more apprehensive of each other and focusing a great deal of their efforts and, most importantly, their resources to maintaining each other off balance and striving for political supremacy in the Third World countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

VI. Policy Implications.

In formulating a foreign policy stance regarding the PRC, the United States seeks to be cognizant of several dilemmas which place constraints on PRC actions and initiatives. The first dilemma centers upon PRC security concerns. If the PRC seeks to oppose both the Soviet Union and the United States and strives to obtain Third World support, it faces the loss of the security benefit derived from detente with the United States and would conceivably result in a US-Soviet alliance against the PRC. Alternatively, if mainland China establishes an understanding with the United States, the PRC faces charges of splitting the global anti-imperialist movement and tacitly supporting the status-quo. Additionally, the PRC claim to primacy in the Communist sphere would be seriously undermined. The security benefit, however, to be derived from association, to some extent, with the United States would be of substantial importance to the PRC. Not only are the Soviets regarded by the PRC as their primary adversary sharing a vast, common and highly militarily fortified border, but the PRC still regards Japan with a certain amount of anxiety. The Chinese perception of a continual potential Japanese expansionist threat is not taken lightly. As a consequence of the Soviet and potential Japanese threat to the PRC's territorial integrity, alliances or understandings for reasons of deterrence would be essential. In this regard it becomes apparent that, although a formal alliance with the United States would not be entirely to the PRC's benefit, the present accommodation is certainly in the PRC's best interests.

Another dilemma concerns support of Maoist movements. The PRC cannot abandon support for Maoist movements in Third World countries. To give exclusive priority to cooperation with non-Communist governments, while ignoring the aspirations of Third World Maoists, would cost the PRC the respect of those revolutionaries who have looked to Peking for moral leadership and political support. On the other hand, to opt for exclusive support for the Maoist revolutionaries would enhance the likelihood of Soviet encirclement. The obvious implication of this situation is that the PRC, as a possible concession for US support, could only be able to moderately alter its world revolutionary aspirations. Although for practical reasons the PRC has had to tone down its revolutionary fervor, it cannot afford to abandon it entirely.

It thus appears that the PRC would not be willing to form an alliance with the Soviet Union but it could also not, for different reasons, directly ally itself to the United States. Yet, it cannot afford through its fear of the Soviet's military superiority to antagonize the United States either.

Within the context of the foregoing discussion one possible alternative to US foreign policy is to establish amicable relationships with both the PRC and the Soviet Union with each side hopefully attempting to come to terms with the United States in order to counter the influence of the other, yet not committing the United States to either one and thereby avoiding possible involvement in any armed confrontation between the two.

Another possible course of action is no preplanned action but rather dealing with each situation as it occurs and solving it on its own merits but within the context of the dynamics currently dominating Sino-Soviet relations. A third alternative might conceivably involve a combination of the former two depending on the situation and primary concerns.

In formulating US foreign policy, certain advantages arise from the Sino-Soviet dispute. One advantage

lies in the fact that the differences between the two run so deep that reconciliation in the near future is not likely, thus precluding US concerns over a unified and hostile Communist camp. Additionally, the fact that the PRC could not risk antagonizing the United States due to her relative military and economic insufficiency would allow the United States to concentrate the major portion of its efforts and resources in countering worldwide Soviet initiatives. Another added US foreign policy advantage consists of Soviet insecurity regarding the possibility of a Sino-US anti-Soviet alliance. The threat of such an alliance would possibly deter the Soviets from actions inimical to US interests.

VII. Future Projections.

The origin of the present Sino-Soviet worldwide confrontation can be traced to the time of the Russian czars and Chinese dynasties. Many of the same underlying perceptions and areas of conflict which originated then still persist with the relatively recent overlay of ideological rivalry. The conflict over contested territory is not recent, China's desire to be the primary mover in Asia still persists, and Chinese conception of cultural superiority has probably not diminished either her fear of Russian expansionist military activities or Japanese militarism. It is expected that these situations will endure, and as a consequence the present Sino-Soviet atmosphere of mutual animosity and competition will remain.

ENDNOTES

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